

THE ACCESSION OATH.

PROTEST OF THE AUSTRALIAN HIERARCHY.

HIS Eminence Cardinal Moran, as mentioned in our last issue, recently wrote to the Hon. E. Barton, Premier of the Commonwealth, enclosing a protest by the Catholic Hierarchy of Australia against the terms of the Accession Oath. The protest, which was signed by his Eminence, was as follows:—

'We, the Catholic Hierarchy of the Australian Commonwealth, hereby record our solemn protest against the studied insult offered to the Catholic subjects of the Empire by the Declaration and Oath required from the Sovereign on his Accession to the Throne.

'We protest against the Catholics of the Empire being branded as idolaters, and we protest against terms of insult being used regarding doctrines which are dearer to all Catholics than life itself.

'We cannot but regard such a Declaration and Oath in this twentieth century as an outrage against common sense, no less than against religion, and we protest against it as an infringement of the religious equality to which we are entitled by the Constitution of this Commonwealth, and which we cherish as our birthright.

'Devotedly and joyfully our Catholic people throughout Australia have proclaimed their loyalty to the Throne, and to its present August Occupant; but they will not endure from any source words of insult hurled against the truths of the Divine Faith which they profess.

'One-third of the Australian military contingents who are fighting for the honor and the interests of the Empire in South Africa are Catholics. With them religion and freedom and loyalty go hand-in-hand. It cannot be prudent or honorable or wise to repay their heroism and patriotism by wanton insult, and to brand their most sacred convictions with a stigma of infamy from which the beliefs of all other subjects of the Empire are exempt.

'We request the Right Honorable the Premier of the Commonwealth to forward this protest to the Prime Minister of his Majesty's Government; and we most respectfully ask him to bring the influence of the Commonwealth Government to bear upon the Home Administration, that those offensive phrases, which are a relic of barbarism from the penal days, may no longer deface the Statute-book of the Realm.'

Mr. Barton, in acknowledging receipt of the protest, informed his Eminence that he had forwarded it to the Governor-General for transmission to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. In concluding his letter he said:—

'I have pleasure in informing you that Ministers sympathise with the proposal for a revision of the language of the Coronation Oath. They understand that it is the intention of his Majesty's Government to take action for this purpose, and they have expressed their hope that it may be taken.'

In connection with the protest of the hierarchy the following letter, received by the Cardinal-Archbishop from Rev. H. J. Rose, Strathfield, chaplain to the New South Wales Transvaal Contingent, is of interest:—

'I should like your Eminence to know how entirely in common with the majority of thinking men I sympathise with the members of your communion in their desire to see removed from the Coronation Oath certain expressions insulting to their Church and to one of its crucial doctrines. The day is past when the retention of such expressions can in any way safeguard Protestantism or the Protestant succession, and the mere fact that such retention is a just cause of annoyance to millions of his Majesty's loyal subjects is sufficient warrant for an immediate alteration.

'I have just returned from South Africa, and I can testify to the exuberant loyalty of his Majesty's Roman Catholic soldiers. I may also refer to the cordial good feeling which always existed between myself and the chaplain of your communion. More than once when a soldier lay dying I have ventured in the unavoidable absence of his priest to beg him to fix his thoughts upon the teaching of his Church, and above all upon the brow of our common Redeemer, and I have been thanked by the authorities of your Church for such obvious action. The same line of action has been taken, *ceteris paribus*, by the chaplain of your communion, with regard to our own men. I cannot speak too warmly of the great and generous kindness I have always received while in active service from both priests and laity.'

Rev. Walter R. Yates, now attending to the colored missions in Virginia, U.S., is a convert, a graduate of Yale, and an ex-commonwealth attorney of a southern State. Soon after his conversion he decided to give himself to the work for negroes. He was ordained priest in Baltimore in 1896.

Mr. F. Marion Crawford, the novelist, who is now at work on the life of Leo XIII., characterises him as one of the greatest scholars of the present age. 'It was no light task,' he said, 'to undertake to write a comprehensive biography of the man who was born before the battle of Waterloo, and has lived into this century after attaining such great eminence. His career in the last 21 years has been so identified with every great move of European diplomacy that to comprehend it one must study every important development of European history during that time. The Pope is a man of wonderful vitality to endure the fatigue he has recently undergone. When you and I are 91 we shall not be celebrating jubilees. But there is no doubt that in spite of his vitality the Pope is steadily growing weaker. Though I have not seen him lately I hear what is going on in the Vatican. He talks less than formerly and spends several hours a day on a couch, lying down, with eyes closed. Of course there are moments when he rouses himself, when he shows his old strength, but not often. Those who are near him tell me that he may live for some years.'

CATHOLICS AND THE KING.

HIS Majesty the King on Friday, May 3, received in state at St. James's Palace a number of deputations from religious and civic bodies of the United Kingdom, who came to present to his Majesty addresses of condolence on the death of Queen Victoria and of congratulation on his Majesty's accession to the Throne. The ceremony of presenting the addresses, which lasted about half an hour, took place in the Throne Room.

The most important of the deputations was that of the Cardinal-Archbishop, Bishops of the Catholic Church in England, and representatives of the clergy, laity, peers, and commoners. It was headed by his Eminence Cardinal Vaughan, Archbishop of Westminster, who presented the address, and included the Bishops of Nottingham, Birmingham, Northampton, Hexham, and Newcastle, Salford, Clifton, Liverpool, Menevia, Southwark, Shrewsbury, Portsmouth, Emmaus, Cisamus, Hermopolis, and Phocœa. The venerable Bishop of Plymouth was unable to travel to London.

The peers were: The Duke of Norfolk, the Marquis of Ripon, the Earl of Denbigh, the Earl of Ashburnham, the Earl of Westmeath, the Earl of Gainsborough, Viscount Southwell, Lord Mowbray and Stourton, Lord Braye, Lord Petre, Lord Arundell of Wardour, Lord Clifford, Lord Herries, Lord Gerard, and Lord Morris.

The following members of the Council of the Catholic Union attended: Lord Edmund Talbot, M.P., Lord Ralph Kerr, his Honor Judge Bagshawe, Admiral Whyte, Mr. F. R. Wegg-Prosser, Mr. Wilfrid Ward, Mr. James Brand, Sir John Knill, Bart., the Hon. Everard Fielding, Sir John Austin, Bart., M.P., Mr. James Hope, M.P., Lieut.-Col. Ross of Bladensburg, and Mr. W. S. Lilly (secretary).

The Catholic School Committee was represented by the Very Rev. W. F. B. Richards, the Right Rev. Mgr. Scott, Mr. C. E. Vertue, Mr. E. Young, Lord Walter Kerr, Mr. C. W. Bagshawe, Canon Barron, Mr. Stapleton-Bretherton, Mr. Fitzherbert-Brockholes, the Right Rev. Mgr. Carr, the Rev. A. L. Chattaway, Dr. Counsel, Mr. C. E. de Trafford, the Rev. O. Dolan, Mr. A. C. Dunlop, Mr. G. Findlay, the Right Rev. Mgr. Grady, Mr. D. Howell, Mr. W. M. Hunnybun, Canon Keatings, Canon Killy, Mr. J. G. Kenyon, Mr. A. King, the Rev. A. Magill, the Rev. F. O'Reilly, Mr. Powell, Mr. Pyke.

The address was in the following terms:—

May it please your Majesty,—We, the Cardinal-Archbishop and Bishops of the Roman Catholic Church in England, and representatives of the clergy and laity, peers and commoners, humbly approach your Majesty upon the earliest occasion since your accession to the Throne, in order to tender to you our allegiance and our loyal devotion to your Throne and person. While we have deeply grieved with your Majesty and the Royal Family on the loss which has recently plunged the whole Empire into mourning, we may now be permitted to thank God that in your Majesty He has given to us a Sovereign so well fitted to rule over this great Empire by the years of preparation and labor which you have devoted to becoming acquainted with the wants and character of your multitudinous subjects. Your Majesty's life has been spent in the midst of your people, sharing in their happiness and prosperity, actively engaged in ameliorating the condition of the lowly, and in promoting their comfort in sickness and suffering. All classes of the population—the leisured, the professional, the industrial, and the poor—have been the object of your sympathy and interest. These facts, which are manifest, form a happy omen for the future. Our prayers are continually offered up for your Majesty, especially after the principal Mass on each Sunday; and we venture to assure you that none of your subjects pray more fervently or more frequently that your reign may be long, beneficent, and adorned by every Christian virtue—that you may be ever victorious in war and prosperous in peace—and that He Who is the way, the truth, and the life, may guide and bless our King and Queen and their Royal Family in this world, and may open to them hereafter the gates of the eternal kingdom.

The King, in reply, said: I receive with hearty appreciation the dutiful address which you have presented to me to-day. It affords me deep satisfaction to know that my Roman Catholic subjects sympathise with me and my family in the heavy affliction which has recently befallen us, that they tender me the encouragement of their loyal good wishes in the prosecution of the great task which lies before me as Sovereign of this Empire, and that they continually offer up devout aspirations for my prosperity and for that of Queen Alexandra and of the members of my house. It will be my endeavor to promote to the best of my ability the enjoyment of the blessings of liberty, tolerance, peace, and good will among all classes of my people.

The total cost of the Commonwealth celebrations in Melbourne will run into six figures. That represents the Government's share, but £10,000 spent by the City Council has to be added, making a nice bill of £110,000. However, a part of this will be refunded in the shape of cash sales of much of the material used in the works. South Australia, Tasmania, and Western Australia are large purchasers, as also the committee of the proposed Bendigo Gold Jubilee Exhibition.

Lady Rachel Fitzgerald, wife of the Knight of Glin, and daughter of the Earl of Dunraven, who has died at Adare Manor, her father's seat, was only 28. Her marriage took place a little over three years ago. The Knights of Glin trace their descent from John, the second son of John Fitzthomas, usually called John of Callan, first Lord of Decies and Desmond. John of Callan was the grandson of Strongbow's companion-in-arms. Three of his sons by his second marriage were created 'hereditary knights'—the White Knight, the Knight of Glin, and the Knight of Kerry.